



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Quality Digital Learning Study Minutes August 14, 2013

Members present: Dr. Ed Franklin, Dr. Richard Abernathy, Senator Johnny Key, Len Pitcock, Adrienne Gardner, Elizabeth Bowles, Dr. Jay Barth, Cody Decker, Susan Harriman, Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Dr. John Ahlen, Claire Bailey, and Katie Burns

The meeting was called to order at 10:00. Chair Franklin asked all members and visitors present to introduce themselves and explain their connection to education and/or technology. Chair Franklin then discussed Governor Beebe's appearance at the AAEA conference, where the governor asked the assembled superintendents for their assistance with the QDLS mission.

Chair Franklin recognized Susan Harriman, who gave a brief report on the activities of the FASTER committee. FASTER has met once since the last QDLS meeting and has the support of both Arkansas United States Senators. Chair Franklin pointed out that FASTER will likely be a longer-term project. It will be responsible for keeping the broadband expansion message alive and garnering support of the business community for whatever strategy is ultimately decided upon.

Chair Franklin recognized Cody Decker for a report from ADE Research and Technology. Mr. Decker outlined the ADE Bandwidth survey, which was posted on August 6. The survey featured several questions designed to ascertain, among other things, the current bandwidth capacity and method of procurement of bandwidth at each Arkansas school district. To date, 78 districts have responded to the survey. Mr. Decker explained that the survey was designed to be built upon, and future questions would be open for discussion. He pointed out that the survey has generated a lot of excitement.

Chair Franklin recognized Claire Bailey. She has been working with Julie Mullenix on a non-disclosure agreement, as it is necessary to get to a certain level of information to understand pricing and capacity. The NDA was sent out on August 7 to 78 providers. Ms. Bailey has received 19 responses and feels she should be able to provide summary reports at the next meeting. Ms. Bailey then outlined the timeline for E-Rate changes and agreed to send the timeline to the committee. Chair Franklin reminded the committee that the work is about leveraging existing assets, including E-Rate.

Vice-chair Richard Abernathy noted that communication about E-Rate changes will be important and suggested a session be created for the October AAEA Fall Conference. Ms. Bailey agreed that the idea was sound and offered to review a communication plan with vice-chair Abernathy. Dr. Tom Kimbrell added that it is important to really keep superintendents engaged.

Susan Harriman told the committee that Senator Pryor is holding a hearing on E-Rate and broadband on Monday, August 19.

Claire Bailey then outlined the bid process timeline for the committee and stressed that the aggressive schedule is due to E-Rate deadlines.

Adrienne Gardner was recognized to introduce a video about Internet 2. She referenced several handouts given to the committee that focused on states currently leading in broadband connectivity (Utah, Washington, Michigan, North Carolina, and Ohio). She pointed out that the successful states discussed all featured public-private partnerships. Many were connecting k-12 to higher education, thus giving k-12 students access to content and/or Internet 2. Chair Franklin asked if members wanted to know about any other states specifically. Dr. John Ahlen suggested Maine.

Chair Franklin directed members to look at the *SW Airlines* article they had been given. The article discussed digital learning and flipped classrooms, which emphasizes the need for broadband expansion at home.

Chair Franklin moved the discussion to growth rates. Susan Harriman stated that the SETDA recommendations are what many states are implementing, but she has received a suggestion of 400 kbps as a better starting point. Claire Bailey agreed. Chair Franklin pointed out that the need is changing rapidly, and Claire Bailey needs a starting point from the committee for the RFP. Len Pitcock responded that although the number is fine for his company but some smaller providers might have difficulty. Chair Franklin pointed out that the committee's responsibility is to ascertain what students need and this is what they need. Discussion followed about 400 kbps versus the original recommendation of 100 kbps. It was decided that 400 kbps would be on the RFP.

Due to time constraints, Chair Franklin tabled the provider presentation until the next meeting. He noted that he will be speaking to Education Committee meeting the following Monday and Susan Harriman will be testifying at Senator Pryor's hearing the same day.

The meeting adjourned at 11:48.